

applying a protective organic layer to the silica-containing article;

removing, by cleaning, particulates from the protective layer; and

ablating by heating the protective layer during subsequent processing of the silica-containing article.

a² (Amended) 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the protective layer leaves essentially no detrimental inorganic residue after the step of ablating.

(Amended) 14. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of removing particulates is accomplished by

wiping with a substrate containing isopropyl alcohol;

blowing with super critical CO₂; or

rinsing in liquid water.

a³
a⁴ (Amended) 30. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of removing particulates from the protective layer prior to the step of ablating the protective layer.

a⁵ (Amended) 32. The method of claim 18, wherein the fiber preform is formed by adding additional soot materials by an outside vapor deposition process onto a core cane and a core blank, the method further comprising the steps of applying a protective layer to at least one of the core cane and the core blank and removing particulates from the protective layer on the at least one of the core cane and the core blank prior to to the step of ablating.

(Amended) 33. The method of claim 18, wherein the fiber preform is formed by an inside vapor deposition process from a silica-containing tube, the method further comprising the steps of applying a protective layer to the silica-containing tube and removing particulates from the protective layer on the silica-containing tube prior to to the step of ablating.

Please add new claims 50-58 as follows:

50. A method of protecting a silica-containing article used in the manufacture of an optical fiber, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a silica-containing article used in the manufacture of an optical fiber; and

applying a protective layer comprising a silane to a consolidated glass surface of the silica-containing article.

51. The method of claim 50, wherein the silane includes at least one of a hydrocarbon silane and a fluorocarbon silane.

52. The method of claim 50, wherein the silane includes at least one of epoxy functional silanes, acrylate functional silane, amine functional silane, thiol functional silane, and phenyl functional silane.

53. A method of protecting a silica-containing article used in the manufacture of an optical fiber, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a silica-containing article used in the manufacture of an optical fiber; and

applying a protective layer comprising an alkyl ammonium compound, an aryl ammonium compound, or a wax to a consolidated glass surface of the silica-containing article.

54. A method of protecting a silica-containing article used in the manufacture of an optical fiber, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a silica-containing article used in the manufacture of an optical fiber;

applying a protective organic layer to a consolidated glass surface of the silica-containing article; and

at least partially removing, by washing, the protective layer during subsequent processing of the silica-containing article.

55. The method of claim 54, wherein the step of washing is accomplished with water or a solvent.

56. The method of claim 54, wherein the protective layer is a water-soluble polymer.

57. The method of claim 54, wherein the protective layer is polyvinyl alcohol or hydroxymethylcellulose.

58. A method of protecting a silica-containing preform used in the manufacture of an optical fiber, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a silica-containing preform used in the manufacture of an optical fiber;

applying a protective organic layer to the silica-containing preform;

removing, by cleaning, particulates from the protective layer; and

ablating by heating the protective layer during subsequent drawing of the silica-containing preform.

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a page entitled "Version of Markings to Show Changes Made."

Claims 1-33 remain in this application. Claims 1, 4, 13-14, 30, and 32-33 have been amended. Claims 3, 5-7, 15, 22-24, and 31 have been canceled. New claims 50-58 have been added. Claims 34-49 have previously been withdrawn from consideration, without prejudice.

1. Election/Restriction

Applicant's acknowledge that claims 34-49 are withdrawn from further consideration.

2. Drawings

The Examiner has indicated in the accompanying form PTO-948 that the informal drawings previously submitted have not been approved. Attached herewith is a letter to the draftsperson and (2) two sheets of formal drawings to replace the informal drawings originally submitted.